

Story 1765 (1994 Tape 4)

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of Afyon Province

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A Laz¹ Returns a Clerk's Pretense

One day Temel² went to buy a railroad ticket. He said to the attendant at the ticket booth, "Will you please give me a ticket?"

The clerk was reading a newspaper. He paid no attention to Temel's request except to say, "Get in the queue and await your turn."

Temel looked to the right, looked to the left, and then looked behind him. There was no one to be seen in any direction. He then returned to the ticket booth and said, "I really do want a ticket."

In a careless manner the attendant said again,

¹The word Laz referred originally to an ethnic minority living primarily in Trabzon and Rize provinces, along the extreme eastern part of the Turkish Black Sea coast. More recently the word has come to be applied to any resident of the entire Turkish Black Sea coast. In the Turkish oral tradition Laz people are stereotyped as being stupid or inept. This stereotype (like most others) is unjustifiable, for Lazes are, of course, much like other people.

²Temel is the most popular given name of Laz males. In folktales it is so commonly used that it is virtually a synonym for Laz. The name appears occasionally elsewhere in Turkey.

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"Wait in the queue." When Temel heard this, he became angry and struck the clerk a very hard blow. When the clerk had recovered from this blow, he asked, "Who hit me?"

In a cool manner Temel answered, "Out of all these people, how am I supposed to know who hit you?"